

**Traveler Information
Routes of Significance Focus Group Meeting
Summary Meeting Notes
February 18, 2015**

Next Routes of Significance (RoS) Focus Group Meeting:

TBD, March 2015

Action Items:

- Caltrans Headquarters (HQ) will continue to hold Routes of Significance (RoS) Focus Group Meetings to discuss and answer questions through April 10, 2015 (Jennifer Ashby-Camp).
- HQ will notify the team of the next meeting date as the date listed on the agenda needs to be changed due to room scheduling difficulty (Jennifer Ashby-Camp).
- HQ will share internal milestones schedule for RoS with the team (Jennifer Ashby-Camp).
- HQ will develop and share preferred technical methodology with the team (Mike Jenkinson).
- HQ will correspond with districts as soon as possible regarding HQ's proposed RoS (Jennifer Ashby-Camp).

Decision Points:

- RoS Focus Group Meetings will be held separately from Quarterly Traveler Information Meetings through the April 10, 2015 deadline, and will then be incorporated into Quarterly Traveler Information Meetings once the need has passed for focus group meetings.
- HQ will hold a RoS Focus Group Meeting after April 10, 2015 to discuss the 2016 and future RoS processes.
- HQ will hold future RoS Focus Group Meetings when the next call is made for RoS, which may be in 2018.
- HQ is open to discussing the date for the next call for RoS if funding pertaining to RoS becomes available.

Introductions

1) HQ's Representatives:

- a. James Anderson – Chief, Office of Traffic Management
- b. Larry Wooster, Chief, Transportation Management Center (TMC) Operations & Incident Management, Office of Traffic Management
- c. Mike Jenkinson – IT Coordinator and Traveler Information, Office of Technology
- d. Jennifer Ashby-Camp – Traveler Information Coordinator, Office of Traffic Management

2) Agency Representatives:

- a. Bhupendra Patel – Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG)
- b. Woody Deloria – El Dorado County Transportation Commission (EDCTC)
- c. Iain Fairweather and Eva Pan – Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LA Metro)
- d. Derrick Fesler – Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC)
- e. Patrick Sampson – Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA)
- f. Mark Heiman – Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG)
- g. Jenny Herrera and Tim Byrne – San Bernardino Associated Governments (SANBAG)
- h. James Dreisbach-Towle and Chiachi Rumbolo – San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG)

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- i. Phillip Law – Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)
- 3) Caltrans' District Representatives:
 - a. Jeff Morneau – District 3
 - b. Cameron Oakes – District 4
 - c. Kelly McClendon – District 5
 - d. Dawn Helou, Neil Hashiba and Daria Simolke – District 7
 - e. Mark Roberts and Tom Ainsworth – District 8
 - f. Shahin Sepassi and Gary Vettese – District 11
 - g. Yatman Kwan and Sarah Chamberlain – District 12

RoS criteria and submittal process

- 4) No questions were asked regarding the RoS criteria and submittal process.
- 5) James Anderson provided background on HQ's April 10, 2015 deadline and the November 8, 2016 federal deadline.
 - a. All States are required to have a Real-Time System Management Program (RTSMIP) and it must be approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) before November 8, 2016. HQ worked with the FHWA and developed a schedule that would allow HQ to deliver the report to the FHWA around October 20, 2016 (at the latest). This will provide the FHWA with enough time to review the report and provide a letter of compliance by the deadline.
 - b. HQ arrived at the April 10, 2015 deadline by working backward and laid out an internal draft interim schedule which factored in the review process and collaboration with agencies and districts. Based on this schedule, April 10, 2015 is the date HQ needs to know what the agencies are proposing as RoS.
 - c. HQ agreed to SANDAG's request to share the internal schedule with the team.
- 6) Agencies expressed concern regarding the process to select RoS, the length of time to collaborate and prepare the package by the April 10, 2015 deadline and the length of time HQ has to prepare and submit the 2016 report to the FHWA.
 - a. District 11 and SANDAG stated they are not prepared to meet the April 10, 2015 deadline and estimated they could be prepared by October 2015.
 - b. LA Metro stated although more time is preferable, they are able to meet the deadline by hiring consultants.

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- 7) The agencies are most concerned with the time constraints for proposing RoS. Agencies have the opportunity but are not required to propose RoS. Whether or not RoS are proposed by agencies, HQ is required to prepare the 2016 report and submit it to the FHWA by the federal deadline to avoid possible consequences (e.g., loss of project funding, project approvals, sanctions, etc). HQ clarified one of the challenges faced that may have caused confusion in the process and timeline was the Traveler Information position was vacant for about seven months.
- 8) Questions regarding RoS funding were posed by agencies. HQ previously shared an email from the FHWA stating no new federal funding is available, and the current benefit to proposing RoS is to improve traveler information statewide.
- 9) Agencies agreed they had all seen the Criteria for Designating RoS and HQ confirmed the dates listed in the RoS submittal process are still the current dates.
- 10) HQ developed the criteria to aid agencies in proposing RoS and to identify which routes are accepted in the RTSMIP.
- 11) HQ explained the federal regulation for the RTSMIP was initially introduced in 2010 and includes two parts: Interstates and non-Interstate metropolitan area RoS. The 2014 report for Interstates was submitted to the FHWA on Oct 20, 2014. HQ received the conformance letter from the FHWA the first week of November 2014. HQ did not intend to impose unrealistic deadlines and is complying with federal regulations. For the 2016 effort, the agencies are part of the process and it is the responsibility of the agency to decide if they are able to propose RoS that meet the requirements.
- 12) HQ has had dialog with the FHWA confirming the 2016 report will be very similar to the 2014 report for the four reporting provisions: construction activities, roadway or lane blocking incidents, roadway weather observations and travel times. The only one of the four reporting requirements that is different in 2016 is travel time information is only required on freeways. 85 percent accuracy and 90 percent availability must be demonstrated for each route and the information must be available to HQ within the specified times. If the RoS are included in the RTSMIP and any of the reporting requirements, accuracy and availability are not met, the RoS will not be in compliance. HQ is asking agencies to propose RoS that are able to meet all required reporting provisions at the time the RoS package is submitted to HQ. Agencies posed the question of whether or not RoS can be included in the 2016 report if they meet the reporting requirements by the time HQ submits the report to the FHWA. To clarify, these reporting requirements must be met and demonstrated in the RoS submittal package due by April 10, 2015 or they will not be accepted in the RTSMIP.

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- 13) Agencies questioned why they, along with the districts, were not involved earlier in the two part process in order to be better prepared to meet deadlines. Mike Jenkinson explained he was the statewide Traveler Information Manager when the federal regulation was released. It was made clear in all meetings from 2010-2014 that this was a two part process. Mike Jenkinson created a suggested list of RoS based solely on the State Highway System (SHS) in 2013 and shared this information with agencies. The challenge with the list was the reporting requirement for travel times. HQ has systems in place for the reporting information; therefore, state highways will likely meet the reporting requirements for RoS. The 2014 report to the FHWA established the plan for Interstates and also developed the process for RoS in 2016.
- a. SANDAG stated the first time both SANDAG and District 11 received knowledge of RoS was at the Quarterly Traveler Information meeting in December 2014.
 - b. SANBAG stated the level of criteria and expectations were not expressed in these meetings; Mike Jenkinson agreed this was not shared at that time.
- 14) Agencies conveyed confusion on deciding which and how many routes to include as RoS from a region (e.g., integrated corridor routes, arterials, etc).
- 15) SANDAG asked if HQ would be willing to fund efforts or propose a program to aid the agencies in bringing RoS into the RTSMIP after the 2016 federal deadline. SANDAG and MTC stated they have both contributed travel time information for Caltrans use to make the 511 system more robust and to have the information available to upload to QuickMap. HQ clarified 511 and QuickMap are not points of compliance per 23 CFR 511. The regulation requires State DOTs to collaborate with local agencies and HQ understands the agencies are responsible for a considerable effort in proposing RoS. HQ cannot commit to funding efforts or programs. HQ acknowledges this is not a static process and some things could possibly have been done differently, especially given the fact many of the team members have changed. At this point, HQ needs to focus on moving forward and making the process work as well as it can for all involved. There will be another chance to propose RoS, possibly in 2018. The agencies inquired if HQ would be willing to discuss this as a dynamic, changing process should funding become available after the 2016 deadline. Should funding pertaining to RoS change, HQ will be open to discussions on possibly adjusting the next call for RoS.

Technical session with Office of Technology representative Mike Jenkinson

- 16) Technical questions: MTC
- a. *Does HQ expect the MPOs to push the RoS data to HQ, or will HQ pull the data from the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) via Application Programming Interfaces (APIs)?*
 - i. HQ prefers to pull the data.
 - b. *If HQ expects data to be pushed to them, will HQ pay for any development cost necessary to meet this requirement?*

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- i. Not applicable as HQ will pull the data.
- c. *How will HQ separate or identify the RoS data from other roadways in the data feed?*
 - i. Assuming there is an existing data feed, there are two ways and both are open to negotiation. If there is an identifier in the data feed that describes if it is a mainline, arterial, freight line, etc., HQ could designate a variable for RoS. If not, HQ would require some type of secondary listing of the RoS and would then parse the feed based on that agreed list of RoS. To clarify, there would not be a secondary feed. If the existing feed has the RoS but it is not identified, HQ would obtain the RoS list from the agency and parse the feed.
- d. *MTC understands HQ would like the data in XML format. Does HQ have an interface control document that defines the type or delineation of the data?*
 - i. The criteria currently require the data in XML format. If the agency has an XML format feed, HQ would parse it accordingly and pull it out. HQ prefers XML format and has the capability to pull virtually any data in and transcode it. If the agency has an existing feed, HQ suggests this existing feed is not changed. HQ will be able to transcode the data within the time requirements stated in the criteria. HQ would need the agency to provide the definitions of the feed.
- e. *MTC has its own XML structure that may be different from HQ's XML structure. Will MTC be required to reformat the XML structure to align with HQ's XML structure?*
 - i. Since the agency must already have the capability of the XML structure, the current XML structure will not need to be formatted and HQ will transcode the data for our use.

17) Technical questions: SACOG

- a. *Would HQ produce a preferred methodology for route descriptors fields (e.g., route name, lat/long, points, etc)?*
 - i. Caltrans preferred methodology is lat/long, but HQ can work with multiple types of data. Mike Jenkinson will create the preferred methodology and share it with the team.

18) District 11 questions from Traffic Operations and Planning

- a. *The fact sheet mentions the "challenges" of coordinating with the various transportation partners and stakeholders, with HQ holding "quarterly meetings" as needed...who is taking the lead on this (Planning, Local Assistance, Traffic Ops, Office of Technology)? Feedback that I'm getting from my MPO is that there is not enough time to come up with a strategic RoS plan that all local agencies could agree to that meets the required criteria. Someone should take the lead in coming up with an initial RoS proposal based on the listed factors as a starting point and then get feedback from the respective*

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agencies. Typical questions include: What routes will be part of this network? Who decides? What's the process?

- i. The timeline discussion was handled previously in the teleconference. Mike Jenkinson had previously developed a list of routes. The federal regulation requires Caltrans to collaborate with the agencies. If the agencies have routes that currently meet all of the criteria, HQ would like to add these routes to the 2016 report, but there is no requirement to the agencies to propose RoS.
 - ii. James Anderson clarified the RTSMIP is a statewide program with statewide level significance. Providing there is no opposition, HQ Traffic Operations will continue in the lead capacity over the RTSMIP and will coordinate statewide activities and submit reports to the FHWA. The agencies will take the lead on developing RoS in their respective region and submitting them to HQ.
- b. *If State highways and/or local arterials meet the “factors to consider” in designating RoS but don't have the ITS infrastructure in place at this time to collect traffic and travel condition data...should they then not be considered as RoS? Do all requirements have to be met at this time for RoS designation?*
 - i. If the infrastructure is not in place and HQ cannot pull the data into the database, then the routes cannot be designated as RoS at this time because these elements are required under the federal regulation.
- c. *What will a local agency gain to have a route designated as a RoS...will federal funding be made available to install ITS elements required for traveler information if the routes don't have it now?*
 - i. The FHWA has not provided a financial benefit for proposing RoS. The benefit is enhancing the data that is provided to the public for traveler information. If routes do not currently have the required elements and are unable to report on all requirements with 85 percent accuracy and 90 percent availability, then the routes cannot be accepted into the RTSMIP at this time. At this time, the next opportunity for proposing RoS may be in 2018.
- d. *How does the RoS network line up with all the other networks, especially recent efforts to update routes of interregional significance in the Interregional Transportation System Plan (ITSP)?*
 - i. Factors to consider in designating RoS have previously been discussed in this meeting (e.g., goods movement). These are factors to consider when designating RoS, but the focus for this regulation is on the four provisions for reporting traffic and travel conditions (travel time information is only required on freeways).

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- e. How does the RoS focus on the travel information line up with regional 511 efforts?*
 - i. It is up to the agencies to decide. The regulation discusses providing information to the public and efficient and effective movement on all roadways throughout the state. If all the information goes into the Commercial Wholesale Web Portal (CWWP) and is accessible, the information can be disseminated to the public through 511 systems and other mechanisms.
- 19) Next call for RoS question: LA Metro
- a. If funding for RoS becomes available before 2018, will HQ be willing to open up the next call for RoS before 2018?*
 - i. James Anderson responded that HQ is open to having the discussion if funding becomes available for RoS before 2018. It is very difficult for HQ to commit when future funding is uncertain. Based on workload, priorities and commitments, HQ is currently planning on 2018 for the next call for RoS. The FHWA has left this portion of the process up to HQ. This target date is based on workload, current schedule to meet 23 CFR 511 and other priorities for the statewide Traveler Information Program.

Regional ITS Architecture

- 20) This agenda item was not handled during the meeting.
- a. Just to clarify, HQ previously shared the 2014 RTSMIP report for Interstate routes which was submitted to the FHWA last November. The FHWA found Caltrans in compliance and commented that the 2016 RTSMIP report for metropolitan area non-Interstate RoS should look very similar to the 2014 report. In order for agencies to be in compliance on this point, each regional area needs to evaluate if their Regional ITS Architectures show the components and functionality of the RTSMIP and if not, the ITS Architecture will need to be updated. This information needs to be submitted as part of the RoS package by April 10, 2015. Additional information regarding this compliance point can be found in the RoS checklist.

Adjourn

- 21) HQ's next step is to engage the districts regarding designating RoS in their geographical region. Jennifer Ashby-Camp will be contacting each of the districts in the six regional areas as soon as possible and asking for feedback on proposing State RoS.
- 22) The RTSMIP is a new program and HQ is working to engage the agencies and districts, provide information in a timely manner and keep an open dialog with the FHWA to better understand their expectations and requirements.

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- 23) Due to room scheduling conflicts at HQ, the next RoS Focus Group Meeting scheduled for March 12, 2015 from 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. will change; the team will be informed when the meeting is rescheduled.
- 24) HQ has been holding RoS focus group meetings as needed to discuss RoS. After April 10, 2015, HQ proposes incorporating RoS progress and updates into the Quarterly Traveler Information meetings and discontinuing the focus group meetings. HQ would likely hold focus group meetings in the future closer to the next call for RoS.
- a. Agencies agreed with incorporating RoS updates into the Quarterly Traveler Information meetings and suggested HQ hold a meeting after April 10, 2015, but before the next call for RoS, to discuss what worked with the process and possible changes. HQ agreed with this suggestion and will hold a meeting to discuss the 2016 and future RoS processes.